

BURROUGHS STREET BRIDGE  
Spanning the Flat River at Burroughs Drive  
Township of Vergennes  
Kent County  
Michigan

HAER No. MI-72

HAER  
MICH  
41-VERG.V  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD  
National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
Philadelphia Support Office  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, P.A. 19106

# HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

## BURROUGHS STREET BRIDGE HAER No. MI- 72 --

HAER  
MICH  
41-VERG.V,  
1-

Location: Spanning the Flat River at Burroughs Drive in the <sup>vicinity</sup> ~~Township~~ of Vergennes, Kent County, Michigan

USGS Lowell Quadrangle,  
Universal Transverse Mercator  
Coordinates: 16.632260.4759720

Date of Construction: 1905

Contractor: Groton Bridge Company

Present Owner: Kent County Road Commission  
1500 Scribner Avenue, N.W.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504-3299

Present Use: Vehicular Bridge (closed)

Significance: The Burroughs Street Bridge is one of few remaining multi-span pony truss bridges in Michigan and represents an early example of riveted Warren truss construction. The Groton Bridge Company of New York, an important bridge firm with a large volume of business and extensive territory, designed and built the bridge. Only two other Michigan examples of this firm's work are known to survive. The bridge has been determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places by the Michigan Bureau of History.

Project Information: This historic documentation was undertaken in December 1992 in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement by the Federal Highway Administration, Michigan State Historic Preservation Officer, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Michigan Department of Transportation and Kent County Road Commission. Michigan as a mitigative measure prior to relocation of the bridge.

Patricia A. Fisher  
Environmental Scientist  
WW Engineering & Science  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

The existing Burroughs Street Bridge spans the Flat River (as shown in the general location map) in the Township of Vergennes, Kent County, Michigan (T7N, R9W, Section 26). The bridge connects the east and west portions of Burroughs Street. The bridge and its immediate surroundings are shown on the Burroughs Street Bridge Site Map.

According to Ms. Priscilla Lussmeyer of Vergennes, the Burroughs Street Bridge was historically called the Fox Mills Bridge because a mill (no longer present) owned by the Fox family was located just northwest of the bridge.

The Burroughs Street Bridge was built in 1905 by the Groton Bridge Company of Groton, New York. The Groton Bridge Company designed the bridge's superstructure while the substructure designer is unknown (1). This bridge replaced a single span structure (1).

The bridge is a two span, pony truss steel structure with a timber deck approximately 120 feet in length. Each span is about 60 feet in length.

The bridge rests on one concrete pier and a concrete abutment on each end. The bridge deck consists of timber with extruded steel running plates. The roadway (one lane) is approximately 13.4 feet wide.

The Burroughs Street Bridge has steel railings. It has no sidewalks. The roadways adjoining the bridge are each 20 feet wide consisting of gravel.

The Burroughs Street Bridge has been officially determined by the State of Michigan Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the Department of the Interior as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places because it is one of the few multi-span pony truss bridges remaining in Michigan and represents an early use of riveted Warren truss construction that became the norm for pony truss structures in succeeding years.

Little historical information exists on the Burroughs Street Bridge. Information was gathered from the Kent County Road Commission and Ms. Priscilla Lussmeyer, President of the Fallasburg Historical Society and a local resident of the area.

No significant events or persons are known to be connected with the bridge.

The Burroughs Street Bridge has not been significantly altered. In 1939, the Kent County Road Commission added steel to strengthen the truss to floor board connections, added a steel angle railing, and replaced the timber deck (2). Extruded steel running plates were placed on the timber deck in 1989 (2).

The Burroughs Street Bridge is an important link over the Flat River within the Township of Vergennes. The Bridge is also very important to fire and police protection. According to traffic counts in April 1991 by the Kent County Road Commission (prior to closure), current two-way traffic volumes on Burroughs Street Bridge show approximately 130 vehicles per day use this route. Peak traffic was 15 vehicles per hour.

Recent bridge inspections have revealed that the main structural elements of the bridge are deteriorating. According to the most recent Kent County Road Commission Inspection Report, the entire timber deck is worn and there are two rotten areas. Some of the hip verticals, end posts, and bottom chords are rusted through. In addition, the west abutment and pier are in need of rehabilitation or replacement due to the poor condition of the concrete.

The bridge was closed to vehicular traffic in June 1992 due to its poor condition. Its weight limit was 3 tons before its closure.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION/BIBLIOGRAPHY

### A. Engineering Drawings

COMPLETE PLANS FOR REPAIR OF VERGENNES BRIDGE NO. 22 OVER FLAT RIVER, SHEET NO. 1, circa 1938. Original drawing in possession of the Kent County Road Commission, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

### B. Historic Views

No historic views are presented in this documentation.

### C. Interviews

1. Lussmeyer, Priscilla, long time resident of Vergennes Township and local historian. Interview by Patricia Fisher, 25 January 1993, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Telephone.

### D. Bibliography

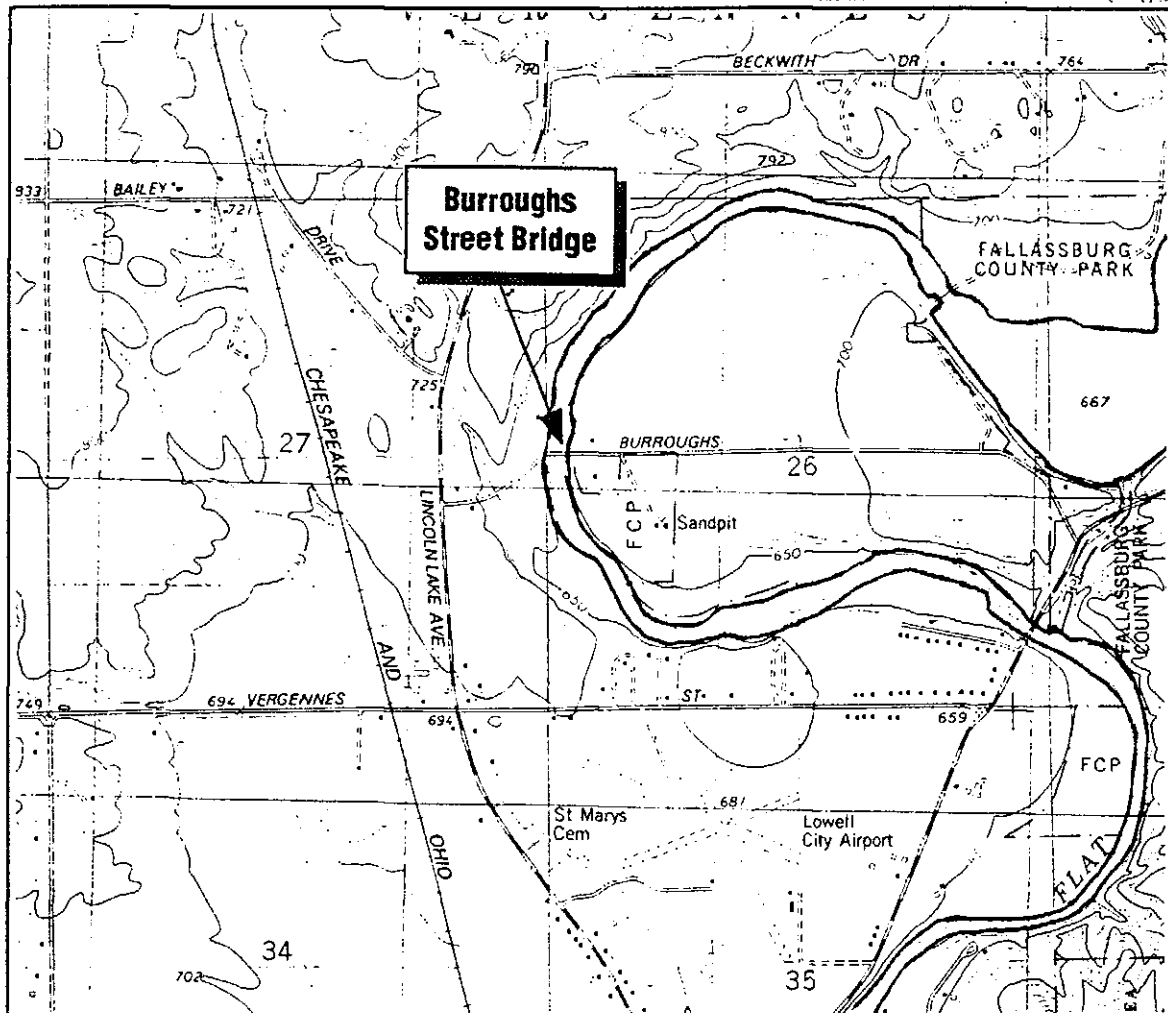
1. "Vergennes Township Board Notes" as referenced in the Historic Bridge Inventory, July 10, 1992. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kent County Road Commission. Photocopied. (Copy of notes in possession of the Kent County Road Commission, Grand Rapids, Michigan).
2. "Kent County Road Commission Bridge Files" as referenced in the Historic Bridge Inventory, July 10, 1992. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kent County Road Commission. Photocopied. (Files in possession of the Kent County Road Commission, Grand Rapids, Michigan).

### E. Likely Sources Not Yet Identified

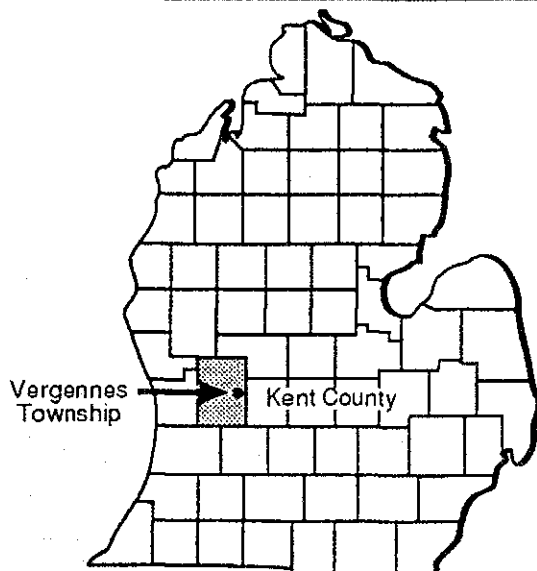
Additional sources do not exist to the best of our knowledge.

### F. Supplemental Material

No supplemental material is presented in this report.



Source: U.S. Geological Survey Map - Lowell Quadrangle, 1978



Scale in Feet

Figure 1

### SITE LOCATION MAP

**Burroughs Street Bridge • Flat River**

Vergennes Township • Kent County, Michigan

January 1993

63531

